

KEY MESSAGES

Join the conversation: Evaluating the effectiveness of experience-based co-design in improving the client experience of mental health transition across health sector interfaces

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Policy context

This research project was informed by the goals of the current Australian health policy environment and reflects the key aims to improve the quality of care for people with severe and persistent mental illnesses, strengthen service models for the delivery of primary mental health care, and improve quality, accountability and innovation in mental health services.

Commitment to consumer participation is articulated in several policy statements, including the Victorian Government's *Doing it with us not for us* policy, the *Partnering with Consumers Standard* contained in the National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards, and the Australian Government's agenda for collaborative government action in mental health. Consumer participation in mental health services enhances social inclusion, considered integral to the recovery process.

In this project, we considered whether involving consumers in the redesign of mental health services would result in tangible and sustainable improvements in their experience as they transition through health care services.

Key messages

- > The opportunity to participate in service improvement activities is highly valued by consumers.
- > Involving consumers and health provider staff in evaluating and developing services has the potential to create a more responsive service that better meets the needs of mental health consumers.
- > Understanding the impact of duplication and fragmentation of care from the consumer perspective provides a powerful impetus for developing strategies that promote service integration and responsiveness.
- > Experience-Based Co-Design (EBCD), although time and resource intensive, effectively engages consumers by providing the opportunity for them to share their experiences and collaborate in service design and improvement.
- > Fragmentation of mental health service delivery, including different funding and governance structures, limits the effectiveness of EBCD in improving the consumer's overall transition across the continuum of care.
- > A broad culture change approach is needed to embed consumer participation in service improvement and design activities.

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